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SA (COMOR)/DDS&T

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CORONA []

17 June 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: SA/DDS&T

SUBJECT: Weather Prognosis in Regard
to KH-4 [] Missions

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NRO

1. This is in response to your query of yesterday regarding information on the application of our satellite weather photography toward the improvement of our collection of satellite photography (KH-4 []). COMOR at its meeting on 15 June requested the NRO representative, [] to advise on the use of the weather satellite (417), in addition to the other sources of information on weather, in the management of the KH-4 [] missions.

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2. I have the following to report:

a. The weather satellite that was active at the time the last KH-4 mission [] was in operation was, because of certain operational factors, reporting both before and after the time when the information could have been effectively used in judging the weather for maximum collection of photography. The principal operational factor being that when this weather satellite was launched last September, the time of day chosen was not optimum for compatibility with the photo satellites. Therefore, it was not always possible to use it in forecasting on a timely basis the weather of the same areas over which the KH vehicle had been programmed.

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b. A new weather satellite will be operational prior to and during the next KH-4 with a planned capability of reporting about five hours prior to the time when the KH-4 will be in a position to photograph a target.

25X1A NRO review(s)
completed.

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c. The prognosis for the weather over China, based on climatology studies and weather reports from other than weather satellite often indicated weather unfavorable for photography prior to Mission 1006. In this connection your attention is invited to the COMOR advisory on 14 May which concurred with the NRO plan: "An attempt will be made on 1006 (the next J) to maximize the coverage on China by maximum use of weather information. The remainder of the film will be used elsewhere in the Sino-Soviet Bloc." This guidance was not followed. We have been advised by [redacted] of the NRO that although NRO was aware of this statement, which was indeed their own plan, and knew COMOR concurred and that the Board had been advised, there were oral expressions by high-level officers indicating that the needs for coverage of China were so great that a decision was made to photograph even when weather indicated little probability of success. (80 per cent cloud cover or better).

d. A new weather satellite is scheduled to be launched on 17 June 1964 at the proper time and inclination so that if it is successful, the NRO will have available actual weather reports about five to six hours prior to the time when the KH-4 will be over the same target areas. This would permit acquisition of a greater percentage of cloud free photography.

[redacted]

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Chairman
Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

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2 C/Action S/DDS&T
3 CIA COMOR Member
4 AD/SA/DDS&T
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